Biology Workgroup meeting: 2/17

On call

Eric Frohmberg (ME)
George Henderson (FL)
Rich McBride (FL)
Byron Young (NY)
Victor Crecco (CT)
Paul Caruso (MA)
Mary Fabrizio (NOAA)

Next meeting set for March 18th at 10 AM.

TASKS:
Mary will check on the availability of bluefish data from colleague at Sandy Point.
Ron (I think) will either send the actual report on tagging in striped bass data Eric or send a link, which he will post.
Eric will look at that data
Eric will contact Gary Shepherd and Lydia Monger about potential involvement in this project.

Meg Gamble is no longer the striped bass contact for ASMFC. Lydia Monger is the person and Eric will contact to keep her involved in this project.

Is the agenda sent out an adequate description of the problem?

NY has been asking the same questions over the last 10 years. Run the risk of ascribing too much to the data. For example if sampled in NY harbor would say there is a big problem, if sampled above Montauk, then not.

Eric described one aspect of this problem being an issue of sampling – when Maine (for example) goes out and samples are we really sampling representatively of a population of a migratory species that is moving up and down the coast or what folks are catching and consuming?

NY pointed out that you really need to be careful with the sampling. Both spatially, temporally, and size.

Eric said, won't get that data. Not enough money or samples (except for NY) to characterize PCB data that way. What we are asking is can we do that biologically?

Vic pointed out that you are going to have estuary specific impacts in spring when spawning, then move out to the coast and mingle

NY pointed out the importance of discussing the time trend. Eric said we will be doing that in the data workgroup

There was some discussion of how long fish stay in natal estuaries. Important in terms of time they have to pick up PCBs. Eric thinks that overall the project (a common coastal recreational advisory) will be driven by some background concentration from moving fish vs. local advisories that are estuary based.

Big discussion of sampling. It seems clear that a grab sample of fish that is not distributed over time will not represent an average coastal concentration of PCBs in fish. Also need to look at spatial variation.

One idea is to build in money to do the genetics when sampling. That way could ID fish from which estuaries. Someone pointed out maybe not that important as when you go out fishing you catch a fish and you don't care and can't tell where it came from. Eric thinks maybe important in terms of identifying a sampling scheme. Namely when and where do you sample to get a good representation of a mix of striped bass.

Generally felt that the tagging information was helpful. Can pull out useful information that we can use to describe striped bass populations over time and location. Ron suggested we focus on the three/four major natal estuaries. Namely

Hudson
Delaware
Chesapeake
Aberlmarle/Roanoke

Vic felt the tagging data was sufficient to give broad descriptions of fish movement. Pointed out 10's of thousands of data points. Eric said a broad description is more than adequate – if we need more detail point that out as a data need.

Ron, I think will send Eric the data or a link to the data which he will then post on the website.

There is NOT something similar for Bluefish. What makes striped bass distinctive is lots of data over many years. Bluefish are much more difficult to study. Even some suggest there are transoceanic migrations. That said there does appear to be some subpopulation structure. Gary Shepherd at NOAA is considered the expert in the bluefish tagging and population data. Eric will try to rope him into this project.

Lots of potential ideas for sources of fish should we get to the point of wanting to do more analyses.

Mary knows someone in her shop who is looking at contaminant data in bluefish. She will talk to him/her and see if the data group can check out that data.